The Power of the People is the Force of Life

Political Statement of the George Jackson Brigade

George Jackson Brigade

1977

The Power of the People is the Force of Life

> … a revolutionary liberation movement must deal with the enemy concurrently on all levels, including armed violence. Otherwise when the inevitable showdown with the ruling class comes, the revolution will be left defenseless and the lives of our beloved comrades needlessly sacrificed.
>
> — Martin Sostre

The George Jackson Brigade[1] has been around for more than two years now, and we have not as yet issued an overall statement of our political philosophy and principles. There have been three issues of *The Angry Turkey*, but these have been written by individual Brigade members reflecting their individual political development and were never intended to represent the unity of the Brigade as a whole. We think *The Angry Turkey* is extremely valuable as a basis for discussion and struggle on the questions raised in armed work and we urge people to use them for that purpose. But, people have correctly criticized us for failing to make a clear statement of our political unity as a group, and we hope that this document will provide that.

We dedicate this Statement to the memory of our comrade, Bruce Seidel. Bruce was murdered by police hoodlums as he tried to surrender during the Brigade's January 23, 1976, attempt to expropriate a Tukwila bank.

Bruce saw himself as an inevitable product of the mass movement. He understood the need for a movement with *real* teeth, and set about changing this understanding into a reality. Unlike so many of his racist counterparts, Bruce did not believe the lives of U.S. communists to be somehow more precious than those of comrades throughout the world who are fighting and dying in the international class war against imperialism.

Bruce not only backed his words with commensurate deeds, he transformed himself as well. He was easy to be with and easy to respect. He gave people everything he had, including large chunks of himself. He taught that each of

us has a tremendous revolutionary potential, and that with a little effort we can apply the scientific principles of dialectical and historical materialism to ourselves, thereby enhancing our political growth and productivity. He said the main problem with our movement is people putting themselves first and revolution second.

The death of our comrade still weighs like a mountain on our shoulders. We loved Bruce in life and we love him in death. We don't mourn Bruce; rather we remember his contributions, put his example into practice, and celebrate the joy he brought to our lives.

> CAPITALISM
> crept into my soul
> lunging at my heart
> digging into my throat
> and stabbing at my lungs
> as the blood flowed
> my heart refused to stop
> my voice remained determined
>
> Then CAPITALISM
> lost its balance
> hopped into his Cadillac
> and retreated back to the police station
>
> — Bruce Seidel, 1976

1. The George Jackson Brigade was an armed guerrilla group that operated in the Pacific Northwest in the 1970s and was one of the most unique political formations that developed during a period of revolutionary armed struggle within the U.S. According to Bo Brown, an ex-Brigade member "some people in the Brigade called themselves Marxist–Leninists, some people called themselves anti-authoritarians. We were not all white. We were not all anything, we were pretty diverse actually. Half of us were women. Half of those women were lesbians. We were probably 90% working class, 75% ex-convicts, and we were tired of armchair revolutionaries who read great books and made predictions and attempted to become the leadership of various movements but didn't really do anything." Their 1977 Political Statement outlines their political vision as well as the ongoing debates among Brigade members. It was such an important document that it was used as evidence in trials against Brigade members when the Brigade was smashed by police repression and its members were either imprisoned, killed, or in hiding. This

edition also includes a chronology of Brigade actions.

History And Summation Of Brigade Unity

The Brigade was formed in early 1975 by a small group of unemployed working class communists. In and around the Brigade were working class ex-convicts, ex-students and other more or less permanently jobless people. *All* of the people publicly associated with the Brigade (B.S., R.B., E.M., & J.S.), and the overwhelming majority of the rest of us, have long histories of involvement in mass political struggle in the Seattle area. In one way or another, it was this involvement in the struggles of women, prisoners, Third World people, gays and young people that led all of us to a commitment to armed struggle.

The Brigade is composed of women and men working together towards revolution. At least 50% of our members are women; at least half of the women are lesbians; at least half of the leadership and decision making comes from women; and at least 50% of the planning and participation in all actions is done by women. We have no "mastermind" and no single leader; rather, we operate in a collective and democratic manner, using and developing the skills and capabilities of all of us. We share skills and jobs so that all of us are working towards being capable of performing any of the tasks, mental and manual, that our work requires.

The main point of unity for the Brigade has always been the determination to *fight* capitalism — with force of arms — here and now. We reject the notion prevalent in the left that the skills and experience necessary to wage successful revolutionary war will drop from the sky when needed. We do believe that the *central* task for revolutionaries at this time is mass organizing. We also believe, however, that it is vitally important that some of us begin the complex process of developing the theory and practice of armed struggle. Armed struggle is not the "axis around which all other forms of struggle harmoniously develop", but it IS an *absolutely essential part* of the struggle to destroy capitalism and its heavily armed state.

We also are, and have always been, united on the following points:

1. The struggle to destroy capitalism provides the foundation for the struggle to end *all* oppression. The destruction of capitalism is our central *strategic* goal. It is vital that we unite and mobilize against our common enemy, the international imperialist class. At the same time, we must constantly intensify our struggle against *all* the forms of special oppression that class society gives rise to.

2. Although there are several classes and strata that have no *objective* interest in capitalism (i.e. petty-bourgeoisie, bureaucrats, managers, etc.), the only truly revolutionary class is the proletariat — the working class. That is, all of us who own nothing but our labor and who, as a class, produce everything that gets produced in society. Only when the working class includes all of us, and when we all share equally the responsibility as well as the rewards of production — the heart and soul of society — is there a basis for freedom.

3. There are millions of people in this country whose lives literally depend on the destruction of capitalism and who are ready and willing to fight it given the opportunity. These are the more or less permanently jobless working class people — prisoners, ex-prisoners, old people, young people, people trapped into the lowest paid, most temporary shit jobs, people forced on welfare and forced to remain there. All of these people are discarded by capitalism in its monstrous development and thrown into its ever-increasing reserve army of labor, which capitalism uses to keep wages at a minimum and as an emergency work force in the event of war and other disasters. It is among these people that armed struggle arises spontaneously and it is here that armed struggle in general, and the GJB in particular, have taken root in this country. We firmly believe that these people will form a powerful revolutionary army and provide the armed force necessary to sweep the capitalist parasites forever into the "dustbin of history". Without their strength and courage we cannot succeed.

4. We recognize that sexism and the special oppression of women are the most pervasive and fundamental bulwarks of all class society; and that the struggle against the special oppression of women is one of the most potent revolutionary forces in this country. This is not to say that sexism is "more oppressive" than racism, or more anything than anything else, but simply to point out that the special oppression of women was the historical foundation on which class society arose. Sexism is the ideology of the special oppression of women and is a major tool of the ruling class to divide and exploit us. Sexism must be smashed in each of us.

5. The struggle of oppressed nations within the U.S. (Black people and

Native Americans, for example) and around the world for liberation and self-determination is part and parcel of the world revolutionary movement and must be *actively* supported by North American revolutionaries. Racism is the ideology of national oppression and is a major tool of the ruling class to divide and exploit us. Racism must be smashed in each of us.

6. The highest form of internationalism for North American revolutionaries is to make revolution *here*, and destroy U.S. imperialism's base.

7. We are unalterably opposed to the oppression of gay people. Capitalism contains within it the seeds of fascism, and gay oppression is one of the clearest examples of this. While capitalism promotes gay oppression all the time, in a period of advanced economic deterioration and turmoil the ruling class historically encourages hysterical attacks on gays as a tool for promoting reactionary views and dissension in the working class. It diverts our attention from the real situation and crimes of the ruling class, and lays the foundation for further ruling class attacks on larger and larger segments of the population.

   We also reject the reactionary and fascist notion put forward by much of the left that gay people cannot be revolutionaries. History and our own practice clearly prove otherwise.

8. We reject the "foco" and "military vanguard" theories. We see our job as providing armed support for existing mass struggle that has clearly developed to the point where armed struggle can have a positive effect. Whenever possible we determine this by talking to the people actually involved.

   In the beginning, the Brigade was also united around the need for socialism and a workers' state (the dictatorship of the proletariat) as a transition to classless society. In fact, the people who formed the Brigade were Marxist–Leninists. They saw the need to fight capitalism with armed force as a necessary step in the struggle to build socialism. They did not, however, require agreement on this for people to participate with them in armed work. And, prior to the Oregon retreat, the Brigade worked with various people from time to time at the minimum possible level of political unity — i.e. the necessity to develop armed struggle here and now, and unity on an action at a time.

   The defeat at Tukwila dramatically changed the composition and disrupted the political development of the Brigade. In the aftermath of Tukwila, we had to start all over again to seek out our political unity. We

no longer agree on the need for socialism and a workers' state. Although we are sharply divided on this question, we have not as yet found it necessary to resolve it either by reaching unity or disbanding. We have, however, spent a lot of time in the last year and a half struggling to better understand the nature of this division so that we can deal with it correctly when the need does arise in practice. On the question of the need for socialism, the workers' state, and other related questions, there are now essentially two views in the Brigade; these are contained in the two statements attached to this document.

We are *firmly* united on the eight points of unity listed above, and on the whole of the Brigade's Political Statement.

The Left

> To build up the resistance of the people to the required pitch needs more than guerrilla activity. The aims of the movement must be popularized, the objectives clearly stated, and the world must be informed of what's happening — and why.
>
> — Notes on Guerilla Warfare, Irish Republican Army

The left includes both formal organizations and independent, progressive people. We recognize both the positive and negative aspects of and roles played by each of these parts in moving the revolutionary struggle forward. We have deep respect for those honest people in *all* parts of the left who have committed themselves to and are working towards revolution. We do not see support for armed work at this time as a dividing line between honest and dishonest people. There are many honest revolutionaries who do not yet recognize their responsibility to support armed struggle.

But around the question of armed struggle, the organized left has ignored their responsibility to provide leadership and support for armed work; and it is *only* from progressive independents and ordinary people that we have received any kind of support.

For the most part, the organized left in Seattle has ignored us. Our experience with them has led us to became somewhat cynical about them, so their behavior hasn't bothered us too much, This cynicism is an error we are working to overcome. But their behavior has also forced us to learn the hard lessons of self-reliance: a strength we are proud of and will continue to develop.

At the same time, we recognize the important contributions made by those few independent segments of the left, and the ordinary people, who have supported us, whether verbally or materially. It was the support that was given, knowingly and unknowingly, that made it possible for us to survive long enough to learn self-reliance.

The aboveground left can and will be a mighty weapon in the hands of the people. This can be seen very clearly in their work during the Viet Nam war.

They played a leading role in exposing its true imperialist and aggressive character and in helping to unite and mobilize people to oppose it. The Vietnamese people have publicly stated their recognition of the key role this resistance played in helping to end that war. We are confident that the vast majority of people and organizations in the left will come to see just as clearly their responsibility around armed struggle in this country. It is those people who critically support armed struggle now who are providing leadership examples for the rest of the left around this responsibility.

Weather Influence

When we first came together, we were heavily influenced by the Weather Underground Organization and its politics. Practice with local Weather support people, however, soon exposed to us their cowardice and hypocrisy. Both Bruce and Ed have written denunciations of Weather and we fully support these documents. But we feel that no mere practical criticism can succeed in revolutionizing that organization, and that the entire thrust of Weather politics is wrong and opportunist.

Weather played an important and progressive role in its beginning because they took up the question of armed struggle in the United States at a time when most "revolutionaries" seemed to think that it was something that happened somewhere (anywhere) else. We feel as much comradeship and respect for honest rank and file Weather people as we do contempt for its opportunist leadership — leadership that brought us, for example, dope dealing and turning oneself in to the police as revolutionary tactics.

We do not believe that this opportunism is an accident — it flows directly from their view that revolution itself is something that happens elsewhere and that the only role for the North American people is to be a rooting section and fifth column in national liberation struggles against U.S. imperialism. Weather's view that people in this country are too fucked up; too fucked over; too backward; too whatever to make revolution is nothing more than an excuse for ignoring Weather's own class background. Both these views clearly underlie *Prairie Fire* and everything else Weather has written, including stuff from the so-called "revolutionary committee". The majority of Weather leadership comes from the upper classes and they refuse or fear to give up their privileges. They use their politics to liquidate class struggle and allow themselves to refuse to change.

We don't think the latest spectacle WUO has provided for us, "The Split", means very much. We think the only way the "revolutionary committee" can live up to its name is to repudiate Prairie Fire politics and turn their energy to building revolution in this country. Instead the main issue in the split is, so far as we can tell, that the "revolutionary committee" claims to be "more Prairie Fire than thou".

…I should just like to make one last point about solidarity between the international working class movement and our national liberation struggle… The main aspect of our solidarity is extremely simple: it is to fight… We are struggling in Guinea with guns in our hands, you must struggle in your countries as well — I don't say with guns in your hands… but you must find the best means and the best forms of fighting against our common enemy: this is the best form of solidarity.

— Amilcar Cabral, 1964

The Police (and other backward elements)

The police in this country divide pretty sharply into two. (Here we are talking primarily about rank and file patrol people, dispatchers, etc.; and not the FBI, ATF, supervisors and other elite corps.) The police are the most visible and oppressive arm of the ruling class: armed and *extremely dangerous* strikebreakers, thugs, hostage takers and murderers for capitalism. Backed up by the courts, prison structure, social services and the rest of the state apparatus that enforces the control and oppression of people who are poor, sick, too old, too young, or unemployed, the police are the front line troops of capitalism. Also, their consciousness, is (obviously, given the reality of their day-to-day lives) overwhelmingly reactionary and resistant to change.

But the police have no *objective* interest in maintaining capitalism, and they are not *the* enemy. The police do not profit directly from the exploitation of labor, but are themselves exploited workers, denied even the right to strike. The police have one of capitalism's shittiest jobs. A good 70% of their time is taken up with socially necessary but mindless and tedious shit work like directing traffic, putting tickets on abandoned cars, getting dead animals off the road, and writing, inane reports about all of this. (We know this to be true because for the past two years a healthy percentage of *our* lives has been spent listening to them on a police scanner.) For the rest they are charged with standing right up there on the front lines and keeping the lid on the volcano of violence and discontent capitalism produces. It's little wonder that so many of them turn to booze and other forma of self-destruction. A central dilemma in police officers' lives is that they have more in common with the day-to-day street criminals they send to jail than with the bosses they do it for. This is more or less openly understood by both the police and the street criminals.

Given all this it seems pretty clear that, as the contradictions sharpen, more and more of the police will come to see the truth and come over to the side of the working class where they belong. We should be prepared to welcome them — *very cautiously*. At the same time, we must make it very clear in our practice that individual police officers are fully responsible for the murders

and torture they commit, and for the general torment they cause people. This means that people should retaliate against police crimes.

We think it is completely wrong and one-sided to view the police, state bureaucrats, bureaucrat capitalists (managers), foremen, etc., as nothing more than flunkies of the ruling class. Although for the most part these strata play a backward and reactionary role *at this time* and must be dealt with extreme caution, they should not be summarily rejected by revolutionaries. In the long run, capitalism holds nothing but grief for any of them and they should be struggled with to see this, to change their class stand and come over to the side of the working class.

Terrorism

The bourgeois media pets a lot of mileage from calling us terrorists — as if that were the obvious truth, not open to question. In fact, we are opposed to terrorism.

Terror is a tactic, no more and no less. People employ terror to strike fear and confusion in the minds of their enemies. Terror, like most any other tactic, can be revolutionary or not depending on concrete conditions.

Terror*ism*, on the other hand, is never revolutionary. Terrorism is the view that the use of terror *alone* is the *strategy* for revolution: that through the use of terror *alone*, we can sweep the strongest oppressive force in history from the face of the earth. We think not.

Terrorism is the flip side of reformism. Terrorism, like reformism, operates on the absurd notion that capitalists and capitalism can change, given the right motivation. For reformism, this motivation is reason and/or parliamentary activity. For terrorists, the motivation is terror. But they are united in the belief that they can change capitalism without destroying it. Capitalism *cannot* change for the better. It operates on laws of historical development that are outside the will of terrorists, reformists, the people, and even the capitalists themselves. Capitalism can only be overthrown — by the masses of people, armed, organized and united in their own interests. Armed struggle is valid only to the extent that it supports and enhances mass struggle.

Terrorism results from the capitalist sicknesses of individualism and self-service. Underlying terrorism is an abiding contempt for the masses of people. Terror is an extremely easy tactic to use. It requires no special investigation to shed light on the possible effects of your actions; it requires no effort to be responsible for your actions, or accountable to anyone. Terrorism requires no principles to speak of and very little work. Pretty much all you need to be a terrorist is the ability to hit a target about the size of your back door at 50 or 60 yards, and a sufficiently strong arm to toss a bottle of gasoline across the street. Revolution will come here only when the force and enthusiasm for it reach throughout the country, and when the vast majority of us are taking part in it — terrorism will not bring that day one

second closer. We reject terrorism and the notion of contempt for the masses which underlies it. We also think that the *tactic* of terror itself is dangerous and should be used very sparingly, if at all, in this country.

For people fighting against extinction, such as the Palestinian people, the use of terror is an entirely different question, however, and we support peoples' right in such struggles to use whatever means are necessary to insure their survival.

The Road Forward — Strategy

> Settle your quarrels, come together, understand the reality of our situation… that people are already dying you could have saved, that generations more will die or live poor butchered half-lifes if you fail to act. Do what must be done, discover your humanity and your life in revolution. Pass on the torch. Join us, give up your life for the people… Take care of yourself and hold on.
>
> — George Jackson

We've learned a lot about armed struggle in the past year and a half. We have become pretty proficient tactically, and we've identified and started to resolve some of our main strategic weaknesses. Tactical problems and questions continuously come up in the course of our work. We've made it our policy to try to develop dialogue with people about our tactical problems as they arise. An example of this is the bombing questions raised in our July 4 communiqué.

We believe that the main task of the urban guerrilla at this time is to master the art and science of revolutionary war. We can do this only by doing it — summing up our lessons — and doing it some more. We are more than ever committed to taking part in this education by practicing revolutionary armed struggle.

Our practice has confirmed for us three critical strategic goals:

1. **Breaking Down Our Isolation:** We have come to believe that the main obstacle to developing armed struggle here is the isolation of underground fighters from the rest of the world. This problem is particularly acute for fugitives. This contradiction arises from the need for security and it must be resolved within that context so that we can survive and keep on fighting. The contradiction has two parts:

   Most importantly, we are isolated from the masses of ordinary people who *are* the revolution. On the one hand, we are weak and vulnerable and cannot go out among the people to do investigation and learn from them as much as we need to. Even the simple mechanical task of growth

— recruitment — represents an enormous security problem for us. On the other hand we cannot *survive* for long, much less be successful, unless we can find ways to do these things. We need to develop creative and *concrete* methods for reaching people. One example of this that we're starting to look into is citizens band (CB) radios. Once we solve the security problems around it, we can use CB radio to reach really broad segments of the population. We can talk to people, listen and respond to their criticisms, and in time develop a valuable dialogue.

Secondly, we are isolated from the aboveground left. This problem isn't nearly so deep as our isolation from the masses of people, but resolving it can provide a basis for breaking down our isolation from the rest of the world. The aboveground left at this time represents our main (even though indirect) contact with the masses and with the development of the revolution. We learn what's happening from then through their publications and other media, and, to a certain extent, they help us distribute our communications to the people. Also, we believe that only by deepening our ties with people doing mass political work can we avoid for long "putting the military in command". This means that if we don't get input and direction from other people, we will be making all these decisions ourselves. Since we *are* military workers, this is precisely "putting the military in command".

We seek to unite with all who can be united around the eight points of unity put forward in this document. We are anxious to work with/ develop organizational ties with/talk with/whatever with — all progressive people who can agree with our eight points of unity.

2. **Enlargement Of The Armed Struggle:** Enlargement of the armed struggle can occur on two levels. First by enlarging the Brigade itself through recruitment, etc. Both the problems and the advantages of this are pretty obvious, and we don't want to talk about it too much for security reasons. The second is by developing ways to take part in unified and coordinated strategies and/or actions with other groups already doing armed work. We are very anxious to explore this, and we hope to have some specific suggestions along these lines in the near future.

3. **Development Of A Rural Base:** As to the development of a rural base, we see this as an obvious long term need that we should start working on now so that it doesn't catch us unprepared. In the beginning stages, armed struggle can develop only in the cities. This is because of the ready availability of equipment, hiding places, targets, banks, etc. Sooner or later, however, the number of people involved becomes unwieldy and even the problem of finding a place to meet securely becomes

> insurmountable. In the final analysis, only rural areas can support large-scale armed struggle.
>
> This shift can begin very simply by finding isolated areas for equipment stashes, meetings, target practice, weapons testing and so forth. We will continue to live and work entirely in the city for some time, but we must start soon to develop our ability to go to the country, hide there and attack from there.

A common argument against armed work in the U.S. at this time is that armed work has no place during a non-revolutionary period. We disagree. A revolutionary period is when (1) the contradictions of capitalism grow so intense that the ruling class cannot continue to govern and maintain its control in the same old way, (2) the people cannot continue to live and work as they have, and (3) the people are sufficiently organized to exploit the situation and carry through the revolution. Revolutionary periods are characterized by massive upheavals, world-wide depression, imperialist war, and the general deterioration of ruling class control.

Although we agree that North America is not in a revolutionary period, it *is* in our future like a ship on the horizon. This is the time to get ready, to intensify aboveground mass organizing and to begin to learn the military skills we will need to prevail. A revolutionary situation can end in only one of two ways: either we will win, or they will. Their victory this time will mean either full blown fascism, or the wholesale murder of the working class through world war. Or both.

We can only win if we develop as evenly as possible both mass organization with the depth and breadth necessary to demand an end to capitalism, and the armed force necessary to enforce that demand. We firmly believe that revolution will come to this country in the form of protracted and bloody warfare and we are determined to start learning how to fight. This time it will be them and not us that bite the dust — forever.

None of this is to say that armed struggle is just practice for later. Guerrilla actions do cause material damage to the ruling class. We help to break down their class power by clearly supporting mass struggle or by punitive actions against them. Also, we help destroy the myth of their invincibility and our powerlessness. We are a small example of the potential power, strength, and determination of the people.

We urge people doing legal, aboveground work at this time to participate in this process of learning to fight by arming themselves, learning to use their weapons, and doing “armed” actions against the enemy.

Tactics

> It's an historical reality that the easiest way to arm the revolution is by taking weapons from the enemy — likewise the most scientific way to finance revolution is by expropriating capitalist banks. The pigs have the guns and the banks have the money.
>
> — Black Liberation Army

The main tactics available to the urban guerrilla are as follows:

1. Expropriation and confiscation.
2. Taking prisoners
3. Liberating prisoners
4. Enforcing revolutionary justice.
5. Bombing and sabotage. (This can be either punitive in nature or in support of peoples' struggles.)
6. Propaganda and counter-propaganda.

The four main political principles that should guide the urban guerrilla in using and developing these tactics are:

1. Take NOTHING from the people; destroy NOTHING belonging to the people — "not so much as a thread". In the event anyone other than the ruling class or its state loses anything as a result of a guerrilla attack, they must be reimbursed immediately and fully.
2. Oppose terrorism, reformism, and all other forms of contempt for the masses.
3. Politics in command — rely on the people. This means that guerrillas must develop ways to take their leadership from the masses of people and from people doing aboveground, mass political work. This also means that we have a responsibility to be *accountable* to the people. Communiqués are our tool for doing this. Through them we explain to people what we are doing and why; and counter the mystification and lies spread by the bourgeois media.
4. The ruling class is made up of *real people*, who conspire and plan their crimes behind closed doors and behind the facade of interlocking directorates and the like. Our task is to seek out the enemy behind all his

fronts and attack him there. We must expose to people the thousands of threads that bind the ruling class together and. to its state. This means that we do not limit ourselves only to the most immediately obvious targets, but that we should in fact always try to demonstrate the *class* character of the enemy.

The main tactical principles we follow are:

1. We see propaganda and counter-propaganda (important as they are) as secondary aspects of our work. Primarily we strive for our actions to have a material effect on the world.

2. We concentrate our forces on the enemy's weaknesses. *We* choose when, where, and how we will attack; this is our main tactical advantage. Where necessary, we divert the police away from the target.

3. Overall, we are in a period of defense and consolidation, and we avoid actual confrontation and battle if at all possible. By choosing areas of low police concentration, we try to insure that if we *are* taken by surprise and have to fight, the outcome will not be in question.

4. We develop our tactics so as to keep the initiative. That is, to keep the enemy reacting and guessing, never quite sure where we are, who we are, or where we will strike next. In this way we deny them the space to develop an effective plan against us.

5. The Compton Massacre of the SLA clearly shows that the police are more than willing to use terror and murder when it suits them. If taken by surprise by a superior force, we will make a positive effort to surrender — we see no advantage to more freedom fighters being fried on the six o'clock news.

6. On the question of security, *consciousness* is primary and determines whether or not security will be upheld; specific security measures are secondary. Consciousness, however, develops and comes from the practice of specific measures and techniques. Security is a state of mind. Being security conscious requires that we integrate security into our whole lives; into everything we do. It doesn't apply just during certain meetings, or with particular people or when the heat is around.

   Overall, security practice is common sense. Concrete methods must be different for different circumstances. We think people should develop and apply *concrete* security practices based on the following principles. We have developed and confirmed these principles in our practice and they have served us well:

1. Security is very important to our work; it provides the context in which we survive and act. Action, however, is primary. In the end, any contradiction between security and action must be resolved in favor of acting.
2. No matter who or what the circumstances, DON'T TELL ANYONE ANYTHING THEY DON'T NEED TO KNOW.
3. Who to trust: "Trust" NO-ONE. "Trust" as a *subjective* judgment should not enter into security decisions. Assume anyone could be a potential informant unless you've had long (years) experience with them, or have thoroughly checked them out. This way no-one questionable will see or hear anything they shouldn't.
4. When doing secure work with other people, form an organization so you'll have a vehicle for excluding people and/or thoroughly checking backgrounds when necessary.
5. Do background checks if you have a reason to question anyone. Be thorough and positive before trusting anyone you don't have common experience with.
6. Struggle against paranoia. Paranoia is unreasoning and counterproductive to security. It's a tool the enemy uses to keep us inactive. Adopt good security practices and develop an all-sided, *realistic* view of the world.
7. Assume the enemy knows nothing and that he knows everything he could *possibly* know. Operating on *both* these assumptions means that, on the one hand, we will be as careful as possible to deny him access to *all* sensitive information. We will avoid the laxness that comes from thinking that he must already know such and such so it isn't worth the trouble to keep it secret. If at the same time we assume he already knows everything he *could* know, we will avoid being lulled into a false sense of security and will be constantly vigilant.

7. Good intelligence is the foundation of a successful guerrilla organization. The vast majority of intelligence work involves the gathering and organization of readily available pieces of information. Although this is mostly shit work, *there is no way to overstate its importance*.

   (An important task for people who want to remain aboveground while participating in and supporting armed struggle would be to develop these skills. Start files on developing mass struggle; pay particular attention to the organization of the ruling class as it opposes them; investigate the police and strive to understand their strengths and weaknesses [start by getting a police scanner]; develop target information: suggestions, terrain, weak spots, etc.; *talk to the masses about armed struggle*; publish the results of these investigations so that underground fighters and everybody else can see them.)

8. Seattle is our main area of work. There are two reasons for this: First, Seattle is where we have all worked, lived and fought before. It is where we understand best. It is where our roots and our base and our debts are. Second, for as long as we can remain free and fighting where we choose, we attack for all to see the myth of police invincibility.

   At the same time, we have to stay vigilant and alert to the progress the police *are* making in tracking us down, and be prepared to retreat at a moment's notice to a safer rear area where we can recuperate, lick our wounds, build back our strength and wait for the heat to die down so that we can return again. Our year and a half in Oregon is an example of this. The entire rest of the country is a potential rear area for us. We are trying to develop the ability to make these retreats in a planned way, and on our own initiative.

This Political Statement is a summation of our present political unity. It is the result of over two years of practicing armed work. We are in a process of constant struggle and growth, and do not see these views as static or final. Rather, they will continue to change and develop as our experiences and the development of the revolutionary movement lead us to a deeper understanding of revolution, and the role of armed struggle.

We remind people that, in this Statement, we have not given up any *specific* information to the police. Rather we have let the people know as much of the specifics about us as the police already know, and are hiding from people.

We encourage people to respond to this Statement. We will do our best to reply to the criticisms, comments, ideas that folks have about any parts of this Statement, our work, or questions raised in our communiqués. It should be understood that responses need to be distributed publicly if they are to reach us; and that we don't see things as soon as they appear. For example, we've just recently seen "A Response to the George Jackson Brigade" by the Stagecoach Mary Collective (August 10, 1977), and are now in the process of responding to it.

In the spirit of support, criticism, and. understanding, we send revolutionary greetings to Stagecoach Mary Collective, Walla Walla Brothers, Left Bank Books, Open Road (Canada), BARC (San Francisco), New World Liberation Front, Black Liberation Army, Assata Shakur (BLA), Sundiati Acoli (BLA), Red Guerilla Family, Fifth Estate, Martin Sostre, Attica Brothers, Dacajewah (John Hill, Attica), Bar None, Fred Hampton Unit (Maine), Sam Melville-Jonathon Jackson Unit (Massachusetts), FALN, Puerto Rican Socialist Party, Lolita Lebron, Irving Flores, Rafael Cancel Miranda, Andres Figueroa Cordero,

Oscar Collazo, CATSHIT (Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary), Emily Harris, Joe Remiro, Russ Little, Bill Harris, Midnight Special, Eddie Sanchez, Carol Crooks, Marilyn Buck, Cameron Bishop, Susan Saxe, Kathy Powers, American Indian Movement, Leonard Peltier, Red Army Faction (Germany), ETA (Basque guerrillas), Red Brigades (Italy), Red Army (Mexico), Japanese Red Army, IRA (Ireland), Montoneros (Argentina), FRETILIN (Timor), International Che Guevara Brigade, Committee for the Self Defense of Society (KSS, Poland), our comrade Ed Mead, and all other groups and individuals who are involved in the practice or discussion of armed struggle against imperialism.

hurl me
into the next existence
the descent into hell
won't turn me
i'll crawl back
to dog his tail
forever

i'm part of the
righteous people
who anger slowly
but raged undammed
we'll gather at his door
in such a number
that the

RUMBLING

of our feet
will make the earth tremble.

— George Jackson

STILL AIN'T SATISFIED

DARE TO STRUGGLE, DARE TO WIN

Love and Struggle,
The George Jackson Brigade
November 1977

Chronology Of Brigade Actions

Early Spring 1975 — Firebombed Seattle Contractor

Firebombed and destroyed the offices of a local contractor in support of a local struggle to win jobs for Black people in the construction industry. This was a prolonged struggle that had received wide support in the community. Throughout the struggle there were mass demonstrations and many demonstrators were arrested. This action was unclaimed at the time because we didn't want to draw attention away from the jobs issue; it was also receiving extensive media coverage because of its mass character. Just after the action, we did privately circulate a criticism of the leaderships' strategy of pitting Blacks against whites for jobs, instead of uniting around the demand of jobs for all.

Late Spring 1975 — Sabotage And Destruction Of Heavy Equipment At Contractor's

Sabotaged several pieces of equipment, burned and destroyed a large truck and heavily damaged a D G Cat belonging to the contractor referred to above. This action occurred just prior to the trials of people charged in connection with the mass demonstrations around the struggle for Black construction jobs. After the action, charges against the protesters were dropped because the contractor refused to testify. He told reporters his refusal was based on the tens of thousands of dollars of damage suffered and he wanted no more trouble. This action was also unclaimed at the time.

June 1, 1975 — Pipebombed Washington State Department Of Corrections Offices, Olympia

In January of 1975, prisoners at Walla Walla state prison took hostages, seized the prison hospital and a wing of the prison to put forward a number of just demands including: a halt to behavior modification programs, particularly the brutal one in the prison's Mental Health Unit; an end to involuntary transfers; and firing the director and several abusive employees of the Mental Health Unit. This rebellion occurred after lengthy peaceful negotiations with prison officials failed to produce any results. The rebellion was crushed, a complete media blackout imposed, and the prison bureaucrats continued to ignore the prisoners' demands.

On June 1, the Brigade burglarized and pipebombed the main office of the Washington State Department of Corrections in Olympia. The bomb destroyed the office of the deputy director of Corrections, damaged much of the east wing on the second floor and part of the first floor. Damage exceeded $100,000. This action was in support of the demands raised by Walla Walla prisoners' six months earlier. This action also publicly announced the existence of the Brigade. (Communiqué issued)

August 1975 — Pipebombed Federal Bureau of Investigation & Bureau Of Indian Affairs

We simultaneously bombed the FBI office in Tacoma and the BIA offices in Everett, Washington, in response to FBI terrorism at the Rosebud and Pine Ridge reservations in North Dakota. We had the action to coincide with a 100 mile mass march from Seattle to Portland organized by local Native American leaders. This action was unclaimed at the time because we didn't want to draw attention away from the primary issue of FBI terrorism against Native Americans.

September 18, 1975 — Pipebombed Capital Hill Safeway Store

Bombed a 50 pound bag of dog food inside the Capital Hill Safeway store in Seattle. This action was intended to show love and solidarity with a man who, in an independent action, had died four days earlier attempting to arm a bomb behind the same Safeway store. On the day our bomb was to be planted, we received word of the SLA capture, and our rage increased. Although Safeway is a perpetual target because of the super-exploitation of farm workers, Safeways' use of poisonous pesticides and chemicals for profit,

and monopolistic practices that squeeze every last penny out of their customers, this was the closest thing to a spontaneous action ever indulged in by the Brigade.

Our bomb caused minor injuries to several customers. This action was *wrong* because we brought violence and terror to a poor neighborhood, and we have thoroughly criticized ourselves and changed our practice. (Communiqué issued)

January 1, 1976 — Pipebombed Safeway's Main Office & The Laurelhurst Transformer

Exploded two bombs at Safeway's main office for the Seattle area in Bellevue — one under a coolant tank, and one in a construction site at their administrative offices. Simultaneously, we destroyed the main transformer supplying power to the rich Laurelhurst suburb of Seattle. The Safeway bombs were intended to be a self-criticism in practice of the Capitol Hill Safeway bombing, as well as a continuation of the attack against Safeway. Damage was apparently minimal.

The Laurelhurst bomb was in support of a long and courageous strike by City Light workers in Seattle. The $250, 000 substation was completely destroyed. Striking workers refused to perform emergency repairs on the substation and picketed it so as to prevent scabs or supervisors from repairing it during their strike. ("New Year 1976" Communiqué issued)

January 23, 1976 — Tukwila Bank Robbery Attempt

Unsuccessfully attempted to expropriate $43, 000 from the Tukwila branch of the Pacific National Bank of Washington. A brutal attack by King County police and Tukwila Police left our comrade Bruce Seidel dead, John Sherman shot in the jaw, and John and Ed Mead in police custody. All other participants successfully escaped after firing on police from the rear in an attempt to aid our comrades in the bank. The expropriation was intended to finance armed work. This action was attempted with insufficient knowledge of the police, armed robbery tactics, and combat training. We paid dearly for our lessons.

March 10, 1976 — Prisoner Liberation

We rescued John Sherman from police custody during a doctors appointment at Harbourview Medical Center. During the action it became necessary to shoot and wound a King County police officer because of his failure to cooperate fully with the comrade assigned to him. ("International Women's Day" Communiqué issued)

June 1976 to February 1977 — Tactical Retreat

Tukwila nearly destroyed us, and the rescue drained the last of our meager resources. The organized left almost unanimously rejected us, and this forced us to learn to rely on ourselves, ordinary people, and progressive independents in the left. Many ordinary people did help us, knowingly and unknowingly, and this made it possible for us to survive, rebuild our strength, and learn the hard lessons of self-reliance. This move to self-reliance was probably the most important thing we accomplished during the retreat. We also accumulated lots of equipment, experience and knowledge of the police. We did six teller robberies for more than $25, 000, and ran checks for survival, equipment and supplies. We later claimed these actions because we are determined to be accountable to the people, and because the police *knew* we were responsible and were withholding this information for reasons of their own.

After the Tukwila action, the government had launched a massive attack on the left with their Grand Jury. Numerous people were subpoenaed, and many of them refused to cooperate. In June 1976, the Brigade sent handwriting samples to help clear a woman falsely accused of signing one of our communiqués. Another woman spent six months in jail for refusing to cooperate; and a Black ex-convict prison activist was convicted of participation in Brigade activities on guilt by association with the prison movement, the testimony of a junkie (for which the Feds paid $10, 000 and a new identity!), and because of the color of his skin. Our captured comrade Ed Mead was also convicted and sentenced to several lifetimes in the state penitentiary at Walla Walla. While some people fought the Grand Jury only out of narrow, individualistic self-interest (some even cooperated), many others correctly saw it as a collective struggle and based their resistance on that view. Many people took up the fight even though they weren't being directly attacked. In the end, the peoples' united resistance defeated the Grand Jury attack and forced the Feds to turn to other, sneakier tactics. We send our deepest love and support to all those who fought against the Grand Jury, and who were or continue to be attacked by the state.

May 12, 1977 — Pipebombed Rainer National Bank

Pipebombs were placed in safe deposit boxes at two Bellevue area Ranier National Bank branches. One failed to explode because of faulty equipment, and the other exploded causing damage to the safe deposit vault and an adjoining wall. This action was to support the longest strike in the history of Washington prisons by maximum security and ISU (the hole) prisoners at Walla Walla state prison, and in response to a series of attacks and empty promises passed off as “changes” by prison bureaucrats. The strike was primarily around brutal conditions in the hole, and (again) behavior modification programs. We chose Ranier National Bank because of its corporate ties to the Seattle Times — the leader of the ruling class propaganda against the prisoners.

The ruling class response to this attack was to up the price on the heads of two Brigade comrades. Striking prisoners in the hole at Walla Walla issued a statement fully supporting the action. (“May Day” Communiqué issued)

May 21, 1977 — Armed Expropriation

Expropriated $1300 from the Newport Hills (Bellevue area) state liquor store. This action was to finance armed work.

June 20, 1977 — Armed Expropriation

Expropriated $4200 from the Factoria (Bellevue area) branch of the Ranier National Bank. We chose RNB because of the Seattle Times’ continued refusal to print any of the truth of the struggle and strike at Walla Walla. This action was to finance armed work. We claimed both of these expropriations because the police were hiding their knowledge that we were responsible for the actions, and we wanted to warn people to be alert to their investigations. (“Summer Solstice” Communique issued)

July 4, 1977 — Attempted Bombing, Olympia

Unsuccessfully attempted to destroy the main substation supplying power to the State Capitol complex in Olympia. The thirty-minute warning given

police to allow them ample time to evacuate the immediate area also gave them ample time to throw the safety switch and turn off the bomb. The action was in support of the continuing strike by men in the hole at Walla Walla and in support for their demand for decent living conditions and humane treatment.

By August, the long time, hated warden, bloody B.J. Fhay had been successfully ousted, a new warden appointed, and the hole had been cleaned and painted. The men ended their strike when these minimal demands were met. Subsequently, some other prisoner demands were met, including the release of our comrade Ed Mead and a number of others from their arbitrary and prolonged confinement in the hole. There was and is a complete blackout of this news and continuing prisoner grievances in the Seattle media. ("Tell No Lies, Claim No Easy Victories" Communiqué issued)

September 8, 1977 — Armed Expropriation

Expropriated $1100 from the Juanita branch of Old National Bank. This action was to finance armed work.

September 19, 1977 — Armed Expropriation

Expropriated $8200 from the Skyway branch of People's National Bank. This action was to finance armed work.

October 6, 1977 — Attempted Weapons Test At Car Dealership

Unsuccessfully attempted to test an incendiary bomb on some recreational vehicles at the Westlund Buick new car dealership. This action was in support of a six-month strike by Seattle automotive machinists and several other automotive unions. Westlund was chosen because he is head of the Dealers' Association.

October 12, 1977 — Pipebombed Car Dealership

Pipebombed and caused minor damage to the main building of S.L. Savidge

new car dealership. This action was in support of the six-month strike by Seattle automotive machinists and other unions. Savidge was chosen because of his role in the union busting attempts of the Dealers' Association. ("Bust the Bosses" Communiqué issued)

October 15, 1977 — Firebombed Car Dealership

Firebombed and destroyed several new cars at the BBC Dodge new car dealership. This action was in support of the six-month strike by Seattle automotive machinists and several other automotive unions. The strike continues. (Verification that we were responsible for all three dealership bombings was sent to the Automotive Machinists Union after the dealers publicly accused the union and striking workers of complicity in the actions. Subsequently the union took the offensive and filed a half-million dollar slander suit against the King County Automobile Dealers' Association, and its chairman and former chairman. They also filed an N.L.R.B. complaint charging the Dealers' Association with bad-faith bargaining.)

November 1, 1977 — Pipebombed Mercedes Benz German Car Dealership

Pipebombed and destroyed a $24, 000 Mercedes Benz, and damaged several other new cars and the building at the Phil Smart Mercedes Benz dealership in Bellevue. This action was to demonstrate support and solidarity with the Red Army Faction in Germany, and the thousands of people fighting in the streets in Europe and around the world in retaliation for the West German government's murders of Red Army Faction guerrillas Gudrun Ensslin, Jan Carl Raspe, and Andreas Baader, in their prison cells, ("You Can Kill A Revolutionary, But You Can't Kill The Revolution" Communiqué issued)

November 3, 1977 — The Power Of The People Is The Force Of Life

Issued "The Power Of The People Is The Force Of Life" — Political Statement of the George Jackson Brigade.

Anti-Authoritarian Statement

The most obvious task (often the hardest to see or act on) of revolutionaries in ameriKKKa is to smash the state. Only by destroying this capitalist/ imperialist economic power and its institutions can we strike a total blow to the ruling class and the state (u.s. government) which protects and maintains it. It is also obvious that if we recognize a ruling class, we must recognize a working class. This working class knows no boundaries of color, age, or sex. This does not mean that the working class does not have problems (e.g., rape, lynching, and child molestation) that are as serious as the boundary between those that got and those that ain't. But it is certain that only by destroying capitalism can we complete the changes necessary to our survival as peoples of dignity and respect. We do not believe that the majority of working people are stupid or unfeeling, in fact just the opposite based on historical and personal knowledge. We are certain that the people will overcome all of these problems and the many others that exist.

Most of us are born, educated, work our lives away and die as part of the working class necessary to maintain capitalist economy in ameriKKKa. The economy of profits for a few, consumers and consumed, inflation, unemployment, phoney shortages, never enough wages, welfare and food stamps, abortions only for the rich or purposes of genocide. The economy of increasing illiteracy; where upwards to 50% of high school graduates can not read or write. The civil rights and/or equal rights of today can only produce tokenism in a system that depends on slavery. Wage slaves and free slaves (e.g., housewives and children) cannot be collectively unshackled until all systems that continue to create them are totally destroyed.

We should learn from all present struggles as well as the revolutionary history of peoples around the world. We should also recognize that ours is an advanced industrial society, unlike many countries where revolution has happened or is happening. Advanced industrial society in ameriKKKa also means advanced divisions, advanced isolation, and advanced lack of trust. It is time to stop believing in the "ameriKKKan dream" that we are the smartest and best. We need to deal with reality as it is; recognizing differences that exist and begin to work to build respect thru unity whenever possible.

Organizational forms that will realistically deal with the advanced ills of

capitalism in ameriKKKa must be developed from our own concrete conditions and experiences. Perhaps some will be the same as those used in other places and times, but we must never deny the possibility of new ideas and forms. All of us who labor in a million different ways will decide what to do. No idealistic vanguard will lead us; we will lead ourselves. We are very unsure of the “need” for a centralized government at any time under any conditions except maybe severe famine or plague. Famine or plague can not occur very easily now days as we have the technology for eliminating, most human ills and suffering almost immediately; or at least the capability to develop such rapidly by redirecting research efforts. It seems to us that centralized government almost always means centralized power. All the power in one place/group can only fester like a boil and eventually corrupt even those who started out with good intentions. Decentralization (spreading the authority and power as thin as possible) seem to us to be a better, safer, healthier concept. This would mean less possibility of any group or individual becoming too entrenched in positions of influence and thus over time — power. Abolish power. We must make every effort possible to encourage all of us to develop our imaginations and to expand the peoples creativity.

Serious revolutionaries must devote time and energy into the creation and implementation of organizational forms that will guarantee all of us who choose to fight equal participation in bringing the ruling class to its knees. Internal workings and how we relate are just as necessary as smashing the state. If we don’t do this, smashing the state will serve no purpose. The reformists and “capitalist roaders” could easily regain control by playing on the weaknesses of traditional capitalist attitudes and conditioning. The people are the revolution. Because this is so they will have, as one of their strongest weapons, revolutionary consciousness. You cannot buy the revolution. You cannot make the revolution. You can only be the revolution. It is in your spirit or it is nowhere. Without revolutionary consciousness, (the basic understanding of all oppressions) there will be no revolution, only a changing of the guard. This revolutionary consciousness is vital and must grow on, thru, and far beyond the smashing of capitalism/imperialism.

The power necessary to destroy ameriKKKan capitalism/imperialism is an awesome authority. But our new classless society will not be patriarchal or hierarchical, nor should our struggle to build it. The only way for the revolution to be ripped off from the people is if elitist leaders gain control at any point. We don’t believe that the transition period from capitalism to communism need be a long or closely regulated one. The people will be armed and have a fairly clear idea of life as it should be or they will not have the love and determination necessary to smash the state. Philosophies are set up to be fulfilled; if some say a transition will be long, then they must work

for it to be long or their philosophy will not be fulfilled. Our belief/goal is to be rid of any state as quickly as we can. Only a state can develop bureaucrats who close their doors to the people. Authority can't be destroyed by any movement which is in itself based on authority. Patriarchal, capital and state power can never be overthrown by organizations that are themselves hierarchical and authoritarian (of, relating to, or favouring a political system that concentrates power in the hands of a "leader" or small groups). Instead revolutionary organizations must mirror the organization of the future.

One form which has been developing in recent years is small, tightly knit, autonomous (the freedom to act in your own and others interests in agreed upon matters without special approval, permission, or quorum) collectives; co-operating and supporting each other in as many ways as possible. (This idea is not a new one to this era; it has quite the world history). This form guards against police infiltration and the domination of the majority by a few "leaders". It just ain't possible to be a snitch or a boss where people know (have checked) where you come from and talk and work together on a regular basis.

These groups should focus on identifying leadership when it occurs and making sure it is temporary or for a particular task. All should be encouraged to assume such leadership for short-term jobs. How else can we learn to have confidence in ourselves? Skills have to be shared and tasks rotated, except in periods of extreme crisis. Rotation of *all* jobs is as vital as no special pay, privileges, or titles; all these help eliminate experts. We fail to see how rotation of *all* jobs can be anything but strengthening — as we *all* learn only then can we *all* be stronger. When we *all* are strong with skills and knowledge there can be no professional class of leaders. Non-oppressive ways of relating must be found and used daily. We've all had a lifetime of learning overt and subtle ways of manipulating others. Only with practice and struggle can we overcome our bourgeois socialization and relate to comrades and allies on an equal and honest basis. "None of us is better than all of us".

At the same time, the groups should learn how to work and cooperate with other groups toward the common goal of smashing the state. What seems to logically come out of all this is a federation of some type as described in the SLA communiqué #5:

1. To place the control of all the institutions and industries of each nation into the hands of its people. To aid sovereign nations of the federation to build nations where work contributes concretely to the full interests and needs of its workers and the communal interests of its communities and its people and the mutual interest of all with in the federation of nations… 15. To build a federation of nations, who

> shall formulate programs and unions of actions and interests that will destroy the capitalist value system and other anti-human institutions and who will be able to do this by meeting all the basic needs of all of the people and their nations. For they will be able to do this because each nation will have full control of all its industries and institutions and does not run them for profit, but in the full interest of all of the people of its nation… 16. To destroy all forms and institutions of Racism, Sexism, Ageism, Capitalism, Fascism, Individualism, Possessiveness, Competitiveness and all other such institutions that have made and sustained capitalism and the capitalist's class system that has oppressed and exploited all of the people of our history." (We encourage all folks to read and discuss the rest of this communiqué and any others you can find by the SLA.)

As groups *increase in size and number*, they would collectively decide how to co-operate (e.g. trade) and defend themselves and each other without losing their self-determination. We think this is a very high degree of unity — trading and defending ain't small things! It means determining an economic system that is not based on profits and combating the enemy in all his hiding places. A federation seems to be a working method for recognizing existing differences, respecting them, and struggling toward overcoming them.

Although it's much to early to tell, this federation form could probably be expanded and used before, during, and after the smashing of state power. It seems to be a common view among Marxist–Leninists that anti-authoritarians, and other such opportunist, slanderous rabble don't care about "the baby" and are foolishly simple enough to throw out the dearest thing we have, the infant of tomorrow. We would prefer to not drown "the baby" nor to smother it in our bosom; but to teach it to be strong, selfreliant, and uninhibited. It's true there are several questions that need answering. We encourage folks to be thinking about the following: What happens when the revolution involves upwards to 200 million people? How will the people determine sections of the federation? special oppression? production? geography? We are just beginning to form thoughts on these questions and would like plenty more input. We need to hear your ideas.

A current example of this form at work is the recent birth of 3rd World gay organizations in the San Francisco Bay area. These sisters and brothers no doubt encountered many obvious and presently unsolvable contradictions trying to work with predominately straight 3rd World groups and predominately white gay groups. The solution has been to build several (Black, Asian, and Native American that we've heard about) autonomous 3rd World gay organizations. This enables them to do their work without a lot of bullshit and also insures that the needs relating to their special oppressions

will be met. Another thing this form gives is a real base of support developing from 3rd World gays concrete conditions and experiences. No oppressor can fully understand the pain, anger, or uncertainty of being oppressed. White people cannot understand what it's like to be a person of color in ameriKKKa, nor can heterosexuals understand what it is to be an ameriKKKan lesbian or faggot.

The time for fighting this revolution is never tomorrow; whatever tool/forms are necessary must be learned and used today. Communication is an example of one of the most important areas of what we need to do well and quickly. Regardless of structure, any time expansion occurs, keeping in touch with reality/others becomes a real problem. The responsibility is two way: to let others know where we are and to find out about other peoples. Working coalitions of oppressed peoples are a necessity in every job from painting picket signs to building and planting bombs. But they can only last a short time unless all involved are treated as equals. This means listening to and struggling with each other in an atmosphere of sincere support. This is known as respect; a necessity for all of us and something that is missing in the lives of ameriKKKa's oppressed peoples. We have to learn to take control over our own lives now, and how to develop a collective power base without fucking over each other. We have a job to do here in the belly of the beast, to destroy capitalism/imperialism at it's roots. Let's get on with it!

p.s. cooperating, autonomous groups of mosquitoes can drive an elephant insane.

Obviously the reaction of bourgeois elements to these statements of difference will be to play them up as some kind of a split. We think people should struggle against this sleazy divisiveness when it occurs. We are *firmly united* on the eight points of unity and on the whole of the Brigade's Political statement. Our political differences are NOT around questions that are primary at this time (although they will in the future mean the difference between success and failure for the revolution in this country). Our political differences are theoretical at this time, and have NO effect on our work. We intend to be together and fighting for a long time to come! The answers to these questions will be resolved in practice and decided by the masses of people in this country and around the world in the process of making revolution.

We encourage people to deal with the questions of armed struggle in this country at this time and to fully discuss, criticize and respond to the Brigade's Political Statement and our work. We need this response and criticism. Discussion of our theoretical differences is plentiful and ongoing in

existing Marxist–Leninist and anarchist writings while discussion of the issues raised in this document and our work is almost non-existent. In any event, we are not interested in and will not respond to any comments on our statements of differences for at least six months.

COMBAT BOURGEOIS DIVISIVENESS AND SENSATIONALISM!

Serve The People — Fight For Socialism

From the George Jackson Brigade Marxist–Leninists

As communists, we fully agree with the final goal of liberation and a classless, stateless society put forward by our comrades in their statement: that goal is our reason for being here. We also share the same deep concern and determination that our revolution not be ripped off by capitalists, patriarchs, hierarchists, or any of the other forces of evil that serve the international ruling class. There is *no* disagreement within the Brigade over the need to build structures that mirror our revolutionary goals; the necessity of involving *all* of us in making revolution; the need for people to be nurturing and respectful of each other, etc. Our disagreement is on *how* to achieve all of this. In this statement, we will limit ourselves to discussion of our differences.

Our differences are in effect a disagreement between anarchism and communism. Anarchism develops in honest people because of an honest and righteous concern that democracy, individual initiative and the power of the people be upheld. Anarchist solutions, however, unrealistically deal with only one side of the complex set of contradictions facing us. In this statement, we are not denying any side of any contradiction, but merely pointing out in each case the side that is ignored by anarchism. In each case here, that part is also clearly primary.

There is nothing especially new in anarchism. Every pre-revolutionary period in capitalism has seen the re-emergence of anarchist as well as Marxist–Leninist ideas. Although anarchism has assumed various names and forms throughout the years (Anarchism, Anti-authoritarianism, Anarcho-such and such, etc.), its central characteristic has always been a confused and paranoid view of the state.

The state (any state) is an instrument of class rule — no more and no less. It is, therefore, state agencies who are the *visible* agents of oppression now: police, prisons, courts, schools, welfare, etc. If we take this superficial

appearance and accept it as the true nature of things, we would naturally conclude that it is the government itself that causes oppression, and that the key to ending oppression and exploitation is to do away with government. Nothing could be further from the truth. Government is itself the *result* (and often the form) of the oppression that class society produces. Doing away with government will be the *result* of doing away with class society, and not the other way around. We seek to destroy capitalism because it stands in the way of liberation and an end to oppression. We smash the bourgeois state, *not* because smashing the state will automatically produce freedom, but because if we are to destroy capitalism and its ruling class we must first destroy the means by which it rules.

Since the state is no more or less then the instrument of class rule, the state will continue to exist, no matter what we might prefer, for as long as class society exists. And a revolution cannot immediately do away with class society, it can *only* replace one ruling class with another. What's unique about this historical period is that the new ruling class will be the masses of laborers instead of a few bosses.

We want to state as clearly as possible that, although we do *not* believe that anarchists are "opportunistic, slanderous rabble", we do firmly believe that anarchism is grounded in the ideology of the capitalists, and that its persistence in honest people is the clearest example we can think of just how deep that ideology is driven into all of us. The real danger of anarchism is that it saps the strength of honest revolutionaries, and diverts revolutionary energy away from concrete, realistic goals. The following seven points represent the main areas of struggle between anarchism and communism within the Brigade.

1. Not even the anarchists can completely ignore reality, and when pushed to the wall, they often start talking about a federation of small "affinity" groups as a solution to the problem of transition from capitalism to communism. This is because they view (and fear) centralism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and revolutionary leadership as things in themselves, divorced from the concrete reality in which they exist and out of which they flow. This is at the heart of the disagreement within the Brigade.

   Centralism, like anything else, serves one class interest or another. Airplanes, tanks, bombs, guns, all of these terrible things in the service of the imperialists. In the hands of the people, however, they are tools of liberation. Centralism, in the service of imperialism, is a terrible thing. In the hands of the people, centralism is a tool of liberation no less than any

other weapon. Anything is “good” or “bad” depending only on how and in who’s interest it is used. To jump to the simplistic and one-sided view that the *abstract* concepts of centralism, the dictatorship of the proletariat and revolutionary leadership are “bad” and must be rejected is to throw the baby out with the bath water. Seeing things as abstract, divorced from the reality surrounding them, is the way the bourgeoisie teaches us to view the world.

Not that we have any choice in the matter. The briefest glance at the reality that exists in this country leaves no room for doubt as to whether our new government will be centralized or fragmented. When we abolish private ownership of the means of production in this country, we will come into control of a huge, immensely complex, integrated and unified system of production. The reality before us includes an international bourgeoisie (the present ruling class), with its own organizations; a socialized and integrated national and international economy; twenty million “white collar” bureaucrats; a highly centralized and effective police and military apparatus; etc. Even assuming there were some justification for dividing us into small, autonomous groups (which there is not), the mind boggles at the problem of separating out areas of responsibility and control from the vast system of production in this country and assuring that each affinity group fully acts in the interests of everybody in each of the other “affinity” groups in a federation. We think it’s absurd on the face of it.

The immense task of transforming society will require the collective input of *everybody*; democratic centralism is the tool for assuring that everybody is represented, and that our representation has an effect on the world we seek to change. Democratic centralism combines the strength and diversity of democracy with the strength and unity of centralism. Revolutionary democratic centralism is NOT hierarchy and power vested in a few leaders over the rest of us. *The democratically centralist proletarian state is precisely power seated in the whole of the people, united*. Proletarian democratic centralism is a weapon to *do away* with hierarchy and guarantee the widest possible participation in revolution.

Because of the lack of unity and communication, federation may well be a necessary tactical step at this time — particularly for groups engaged in armed work. In a period when we don’t have enough political unity to form one organization, this would allow us to achieve unity of action while preserving small group autonomy. But we believe that federation should be seen as a *temporary* step, required because of our *weaknesses*. Federation is a necessary evil that promotes and perpetuates our divisions and it should be discarded as soon as possible. Instead of building unity,

federation institutionalizes our differences.

Socialism is the general form we will use to rid society, ourselves and our children of the cancer of bourgeois practice and ideology. It's hard for us to see how this could be accomplished within small autonomous "affinity" groups. What if, for example, the Black Flag Tractor factory in Ogden, Utah decided that the sexual division of labor was perfectly natural, and correct; that woman's place was in the home, and that they were not going to mess with the "natural order of things"? Is this their right as an *autonomous* affinity group if the majority of them agree? We think not. What if the Red Star Locomotive company in Santa Fe, New Mexico, decided that, due to their strategic location in the nation's transportation system they could hold the rest of us up for an exorbitant price for their services? Would this be liberation of extortion?

None of this means that we should ignore the problems that special oppression aid the longstanding divisions that have been imposed on our class have produced. The struggle to rid ourselves of our oppressive notions and behaviour, and learn new, revolutionary ways of being, will be a long and hard one. And we recognize the need, both before and during socialism, for separate organizations of specially oppressed people. But these separate organizations will not be independent governments; rather their function will be to lead all of us in our common fight to overcome *all* forms of special oppression. They would have the same goal as the socialist state of which they are a part: to do away with the reason for their existence; to reach a time of real unity and communism.

We are fundamentally opposed to a federation of small "affinity" groups as a revolutionary goal; clearly a system that requires not one but *numerous* bureaucracies, governments and bureaucrats is much easier to rip off. If it is true (and we believe it is) that the working class "knows no boundaries of color, sex or age", that "all who depend on their labor (paid or unpaid) for survival are members", then any attempts to divide us into small groups is doomed to fail.

The sole exception to this is in the case of oppressed nations within the United States. We fully support the right of oppressed nationalities to secure territory within North America, form their own governments and determine their own destinies.

2. We disagree with the view implicit in anarchism, and explicit in our comrades' statement, that the transition from full-blown capitalism to a classless, stateless society will take a relatively brief period of time. The

overthrow of capitalism will take a considerably long time; and the road there will have many twists and turns, false starts, backtracks, etc. But this task, long and arduous though it will be, represents only the first and simplest step in our struggle to be free. We need clearly to understand the distinction between the overthrow of capitalism (the seizure of state power), and the advent of a classless, stateless society. The former is only the first, tiny step in a journey that will take many years, perhaps generations. It's very important to be clear on this question. Otherwise, not only will we be out of step with reality on the question of what is to replace capitalism; we will very likely pass up the opportunity to destroy capitalism when it arises. Lenin once said that the difference between the Bolsheviks and the anarchists was that the anarchists wanted the revolution to wait until people were different, while the Bolsheviks wanted the revolution now, with people as they are. Ain't it the truth.

3. Revolutionary leadership occurs when the development of the revolution produces people with the experience and clarity of insight necessary to sum up the collective experience of the entire class and identify the way forward. Revolutionary leadership is a product and a weapon of the revolution, and if we are to succeed, we must learn to identify it and encourage it among us. At the same time, we must learn to be vigilant and to distinguish between revolutionary leadership and self-serving opportunism; we must strip leadership positions of *all* privilege and permanence; and we must never allow *power* to rest in the hands of state or party officials. The key to developing responsible leadership is to encourage the initiative of the masses of people. Only the masses of people, armed, organized and conscious of our class and our role in society can for long guarantee responsible, revolutionary leadership. We oppose the arbitrary "rotation" of leadership positions because we believe it weakens the revolutionary struggle. The masses of people will *choose* people for leadership positions based on their practice, experience, and grasp of reality; and they will change them when they see fit.

4. American exceptionalism is nothing new. Traditionally, however, it's been used to deny the need for armed struggle in the U.S., i.e. "America has a long history of democracy, almost universal literacy, universal suffrage, and a tradition of encouraging, at least in words, civil dissent. Therefore, *American* bourgeois democracy is much more unstable in its class character, and socialism can be snuck into America without the ugly necessity of armed struggle." And so on.

   Our comrades' brand of American exceptionalism is a little more subtle. They turn the premise on its head and persistently claim that since the American working class (although "not stupid or unfeeling") is so fucked

up, individualized, competitive, racist, sexist, etc., the centralization and unity of socialism is unnecessary or dangerous or something. If all this slander were true (which it is not), we would expect to find anarchists arguing for *more* centralization to keep all these fucked up people from ripping off their own revolution.

5. While it is true that security is much easier in very small, tightly knit groups that are isolated from each other, it's also true that small, tightly knit *autonomous* groupings can't be very effective against a united, monolithic force like the U.S. Army. There *is* a contradiction between the revolutionary goals of developing individual initiative and promoting the fullest possible democracy on the one hand, and the need for strength and unity of action that comes from centralized organization on the other. Anarchism's view of this is too one-sided; it completely ignores the second part of the contradiction. They would have us take on an (already "insane") elephant with a gang of mosquitoes.

6. "A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; it is the act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part by means of rifles, bayonets, and cannon — authoritarian means, if such there be at all…" (V.I. Lenin — *State and Revolution*). This seems pretty obvious and we don't understand how anarchists propose to accomplish a non-authoritarian revolution — it seems a contradiction in terms. If what they mean is a revolution that is non-authoritarian toward the toiling masses, while being ruthlessly authoritarian toward the ex-oppressors, then we would agree with them 100%. That is a definition of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

7. We have used the phrase "the masses" extensively throughout this statement, and we'd like to clarify what we mean by that. Very simply, we mean the whole of the people (excluding the ruling class and its agents, and including ourselves) as a *whole*; as distinct from any of its parts. NO part of the people will carry through the revolution by themselves — not the industrial working class, not women, not men, not oppressed nationalities, not gay people, not communists, not anarchists, not *anyone* by themselves — only *all* of us, *massed* together, can win. Only when each of us has truly integrated the slogan "serve the masses" into our thought and practice; only when each of us truly sees our individual interests, needs and desires as secondary to the interests, needs and desires of *all* of us will the revolution be completed. This is the heart of revolutionizing our consciousness.

   A struggle recently occurred in the Brigade over the phrase and the idea that our work should be "in the service of the people". This phrase was

omitted from the Brigade's statement of unity because the anarchists among us held that we *are* "the people", or at least part of them, and that this idea therefore falsely sets us above everybody else and is elitist. If we are to have any hope of putting our own interests, needs and desires secondary to those of *all* of us, we had better understand clearly that being a part of the people is *much* different from being "the people".

> Our point of departure is to serve the people wholeheartedly and never for a moment divorce ourselves from the masses, to proceed in all cases from the interests of the people and not from one's self-interest or from the interests of a small group…
>
> — Mao Tse Tung, 1945

As communists, our goal is to see the masses of working people in full ownership and control of all of society and all that society produces. In order to accomplish this, we must smash the *bourgeois* state and replace it with a fully democratic *workers*' government.

It is impossible to leap in one bound from capitalism to a classless, stateless society. The resistance of the international ruling class (the bourgeoisie) will *not* disappear simply because we destroy the oppressors' state apparatus. Far from it. In fact, their resistance and determination to regain their power will increase a thousand-fold. Given half a chance, they *will succeed*, as they have in the Soviet Union. This is one of the clearest and most important lessons passed onto us by the Russian Revolution.

The bourgeoisie have vast international connections with almost unlimited money and resources. Most importantly, they have our deep force of habit passively to accept bourgeois ways of thought, relationships and social organization. Day to day life in their system (capitalism) has created and constantly reinforces this in all of us. While we must begin transforming our consciousness now, it seems no more than common sense to us that this ideology *cannot* be fully overcome within capitalism, since *capitalism is its source*. Only *years* of practice and *prolonged* struggle within a *non-exploitive* social context can finally and completely overcome it.

Socialism — a workers' state — is necessary to make the transition from capitalism to communism (classless society). This workers' democracy will have a twofold propose., First, it will be the weapon whereby people will eliminate private ownership of the means of production and the unemployment, poverty, destruction of the environment, war, and all the misery capitalism produces in the name of profit. It is only within this context that we will all be *able* completely to transform ourselves and throw

off the shackles of “traditional capitalist attitudes and conditioning” that blind and cripple us. Second, it will safeguard and defend our revolution by ruthlessly suppressing the attempts of the *international* bourgeoisie to restore their system of greed and human misery.

The principles of socialism and the workers’ state were not “invented” by Marx, Lenin, or anyone else. They were *discovered*, by the people, in bloody struggle against the bourgeoisie; and they have been used and refined in every anti-capitalist revolution since the Paris Commune of 1871. There are lots of positive as well as negative lessons to learn from these experiences. This is *not* to say that some “blueprint” for revolution is mechanically passed on to us. Revolution is much harder work than that. Marxism–Leninism is a *science* that analyzes reality as it exists, and which *changes* as historical reality changes. *Marxism–Leninism is the concrete analysis of concrete conditions*. Concrete conditions *are* different here than they have been anywhere else — but that’s been true everywhere. Concrete conditions in China were vastly different from those in the Paris Commune; those in Vietnam much different from the Soviet Union; and so on. And the *specific forms* of socialism in these countries have reflected these differences. The *specific forms* of socialism in the United States will be very different from anywhere else, and will be discovered by the people here in the process of struggle and practice. The way to assure that our revolution will meet the needs and represent the interests of all of us, is for all of us to participate in the leadership, of our revolution. To be successful demands that we also be firmly rooted in reality, and learn from and *use* the lessons of history and our own experience, to develop a successful strategy for revolution here.

Socialist Revolution is the “self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority in the interest of the immense majority”. (Karl Marx)

Obviously, the reaction of bourgeois elements to these statements of differences will be to play them up as some kind of a split. We think people should struggle against this sleazy divisiveness when it occurs. We are *firmly united* on the eight points of unity and on the whole of the Brigade’s Political Statement. Our political differences are NOT around questions that are primary at this time (although they will in the future mean the difference between success and failure for revolution in this country). Our political differences are theoretical at this time, and have NO effect on our work. We intend to be together and fighting for a long time to come! The answers to these questions will be resolved in practice and decided by the masses of people in this country and around the world in the process of making revolution.

We encourage people to deal with the question of armed struggle in this country at this time, and to fully discuss, criticize and respond to the Brigade's Political Statement and our work. We need this response and criticism. Discussion of our theoretical differences is plentiful and ongoing in existing Marxist–Leninist and anarchist writings, while discussion of the issues raised in this document and our work is almost nonexistent. In any event, we are not interested in and will not respond to any comments on our statements of differences for at least six months.

COMBAT BOURGEOIS DIVISIVENESS AND SENSATIONALISM!